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Mount Pleasant Village Newsletter

Volume 8, Issue 1 - February 2022

www.mountpleasantvillage.org

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Welcome New Members!

Prisca Weems - Pierce Mill Road

Karen Snyder - Walbridge Place

Felipe Rettig - Irving Street

Robert Phelps - Ingleside Terrace

Kevin Killeen - Lamont Street

*New since publication of November newsletter



A White Mt. Pleasant - by Steve Mabley

The Village Movement Turns 20

This is a great time for Villages! We can celebrate a growing history of support for individuals who are aging in their chosen communities, even as the Village model continues to evolve to meet members' emerging needs and wishes.

The Village “movement” started 20 years ago in Boston, on Beacon Hill, when residents there came together to solve the problem of aging in place. Beacon Hill is more than 200 years old, a neighborhood of tall brick houses edged by narrow brick sidewalks. Snow and ice are a fact of life in the winter. The challenges of aging in a busy urban environment were daunting. Yet the benefits of collaboration, community and sharing became obvious as they worked together. By 2006, Beacon Hill Village (<https://www.beaconhillvillage.org/>) had published “A Founder’s Manual” to respond to the deluge of questions from other neighborhoods, near and far, who wanted to create a Village of their own.

Today there are roughly 300 Villages spread over 40 states. Each of these is independently governed by its members and provides services that are rooted in the community. In general, the principles of mutuality and community-building guide the Villages. Here in DC, there are 13 Villages, each reflecting the characteristics of its neighborhood. With support from the District's Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL), the DC Villages (www.DCVillages.org) are demonstrating their contributions to the lives of their 2,300+ members and the communities they live in. Quietly, the Villages have become a force in shaping the District's approaches to such varied issues as social isolation, food inequities, and how the built environment affects seniors, even as they continue to offer help with household tasks and errands and a wide range of social and educational events. Collectively, the DC Villages provided 17,512 hours of services in FY 2021, and all are planning to extend their impact during the current year.

Villages in our area also share information through WAVE, the Washington Area Villages Exchange (www.wavevillages.org), which includes Villages from nearby Virginia and Maryland as well as DC. WAVE sponsors quarterly meetings featuring useful tips on running a Village efficiently and effectively. The Village movement has a real foothold in our area; over a quarter of the nation's Villages can be found in the DC region, and they are helping to expand our understanding of what Villages can do.

For all the sharing taking place among Villages, it turns out that each distinctly reflects the community it has sprung from; no two Villages are the same. Of the 13 DC Villages, for example, Mount Pleasant Village is one of just three that are managed by volunteers. Relying on volunteers gives our members a real incentive to think creatively about programs and share responsibility for their implementation. Meanwhile, the character of Mount Pleasant has spurred our Village to "push the envelope" in its activities. Village members have taken on the challenge of working with business owners, local schools, our ANC commissioners and Councilmember, and the neighborhood's other nonprofit organizations, among others, to create an inclusive, age-friendly community.

Before Beacon Hill Village came on the scene, many experts were predicting overflowing nursing homes because of longer lifespans and the movement of baby boomers into "old age." Today, however, we're seeing Villages expand possibilities to give seniors many more options for remaining in their

communities. For those of us fortunate enough to live in Mount Pleasant, the options include taking an active role in reshaping society's notion of what we can expect as we age. The collaboration and community-building at the heart of the Village movement occupy a central place here in Mount Pleasant, and Mount Pleasant Village members have each other to thank for the support they receive as a result.



Dusk at the Argyle - by Steve Mabley

Behind the Scenes at Mount Pleasant Village

What is the secret to Mount Pleasant Village's success? Very simple: it's the members who do the Village's work! Our Village is different from many in that we are volunteer-managed. We have a few paid consultants who help with web site maintenance and accounting, but all our activities for members are planned and managed by volunteers.

To accomplish this, we have set up eight [committees](#). Some focus on the business of running a nonprofit organization: governance, finance,

membership, and communications. Others create member activities or address Village priorities, such as providing volunteer services, developing programs like exercise and education, building strong partnerships with neighborhood organizations, and carrying out our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Out of these groups have emerged programs like Meet the Street (focused on getting to know Mt. Pleasant Street businesses) and Hello Neighbor (aimed at building community cohesion and friendliness), as well as partnerships with Bancroft School and many others. All the weekly activities, such as the walking group, yoga at Past Tense, coffee hour at Dos Gringos, meditation, and game night, were set up by volunteers who continue to maintain them.

A [Board of Directors](#) holds the legal authority to manage the affairs of the Village. The Board is elected by the members in an annual ballot at the end of the calendar year. Please see the accompanying article for information about the nomination process.

If you have questions or are interested in joining a committee, please feel free to contact any [board member](#) or Village President Bill Emmet [president@mountpleasantvillage.org].



Potomac at Hancock - by Steve Mabley

Opera Lovers Group

Thanks to the initiative of Robin Sandenburgh—our group leader— Village opera fans have been able to see three Live from the Met operas this year: *Euridicye*, *Rigoletto* and most recently, *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*. The singing has been fantastic as you would expect—but a real treat is being able to watch the efforts of the stage crews before the curtain rises and between acts. The host for the evening also interviews the singers and the senior management involved in the production. These are both enlightening and entertaining. To hear the comments of the star soprano, tenor and basso is something you would not get if you went to the Met in New York in person (and the cost is much more affordable!). As Robin wrote “I think I speak for all 5 of us who saw *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* yesterday in saying we were thoroughly captivated by the music, story, sets and performances.”

We got to see and hear the opening night of *Rigoletto*. It was simply amazing. We could tear up at the death of Gilda and curse the fact that the evil Duke was not punished...what a complicated story it is. The singing was magical. In contrast we were treated to the last night of *Fire Shut Up in My*

Bones—a ‘biographical’ opera about the early life and coming of age of Charles M. Blow, The New York Times columnist. It very challenging given the horrible experience that he suffered when he was 7 years old. Again, the singing was brilliant, and it was fitted both to the story and to African American culture in the mid-century South.

There are 2 operas in March:

March 12th: *Ariadne auf Naxos*

March 26th: *Don Carlos*, clocking in at a whopping 4 hours, 55 minutes.

We would love to have more members in our group. If you are interested please either contact Robin Sandenburgh - robin.sandenburgh@gmail.com or Katie Tyler - Katharine.e.tyler@gmail.com



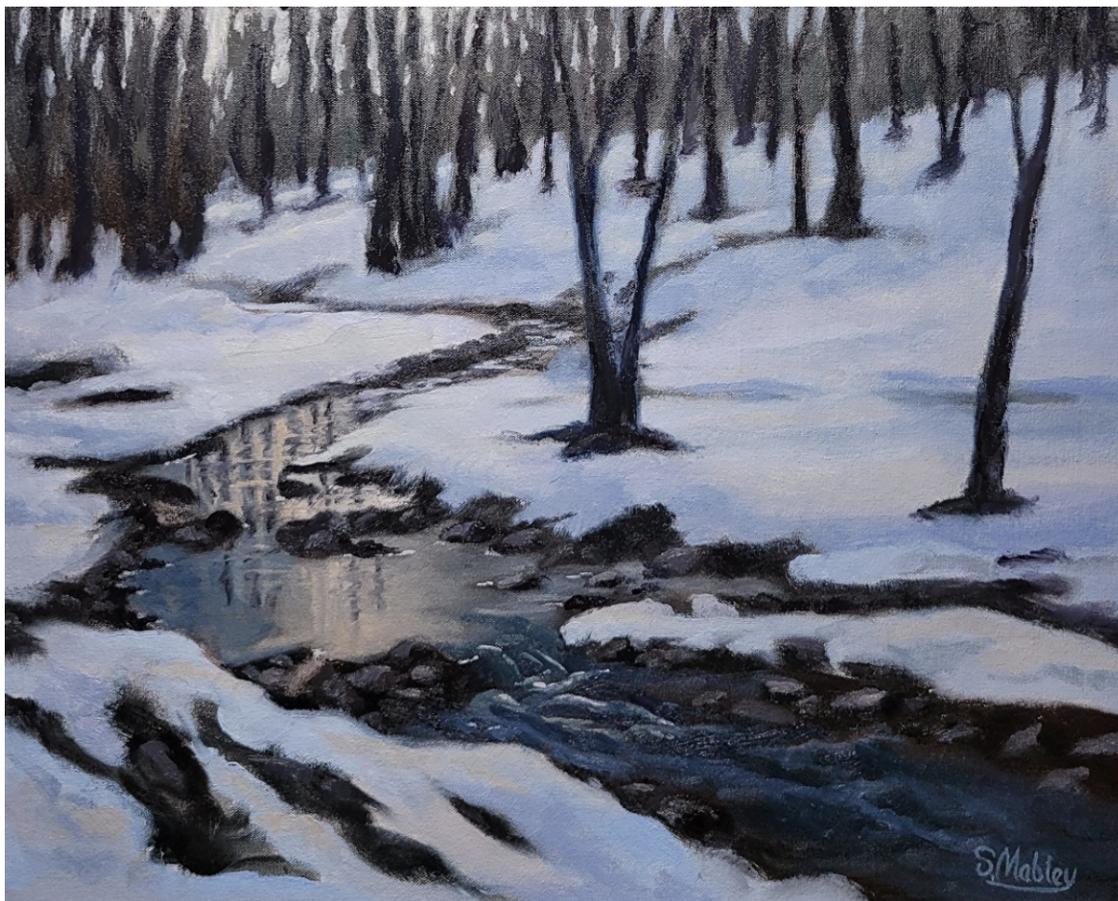
Le Consulat- by Steve Mabley

Board Members Wanted!

The Board is elected by the members in an annual ballot at the end of the calendar year, but now is the time to start thinking about Village leadership for 2023! A healthy organization requires steady replenishment - new energy, new ideas, and new leaders. The Governance Committee has begun the process of determining Board openings and identifying possible new Board members so that a list of nominees can be presented to Village members well before the elections that will take place before the Annual Meeting.

Any nonprofit organization needs Board members with an understanding of finances or the Board's legal obligations, but willingness to serve is the first qualification. Our Village also strives to find leaders who reflect the many races, linguistic backgrounds, and ages of Mount Pleasant's diverse population. To familiarize potential Board members with the expectations that come with the position, members of the Governance Committee will meet with anyone who wants to know more about what Board membership entails.

If you know of someone you think would bring clear vision or particular skills to the Board, please share that person's name with the Village's Governance Committee co-chairs Michelle Hannahs (michellehannahs267@gmail.com) and Alice Kelly (akelly1755@gmail.com). And don't be shy about nominating yourself! Some of the best Board members are people who take it upon themselves to step forward for the good of the organization.



South Fork Indian Run - by Steve Mabley

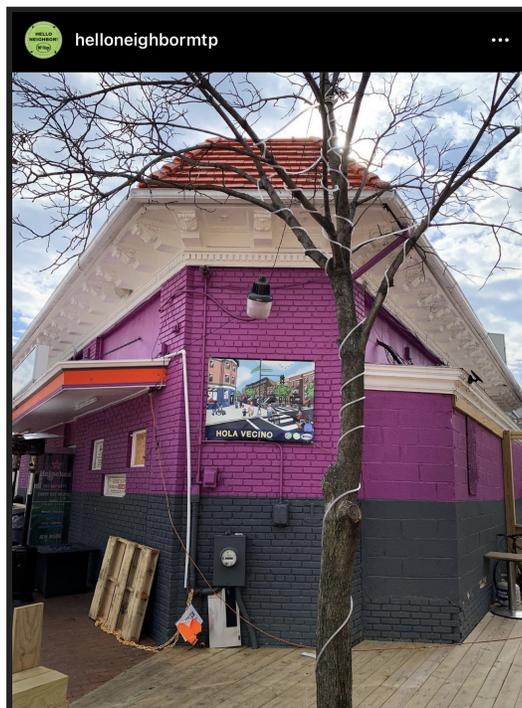
Steve Mabley Artworks

Village member Steve Mabley Steve lives on 17th Street and has taken up painting since retiring from being an Emergency Manager with Veterans Health Administration in fall of 2019. One of his goals in painting is to “transport [the viewer] into another time and place.” He often works from photographs that he finds on Instagram or Pinterest, or plein air paints live, outdoors. You may have seen him painting around the neighborhood when it's warm. A video interview with Steve in his home studio is available [here](#).



Ercilia's - by Steve Mabley

We're on Instagram? We're on Instagram!

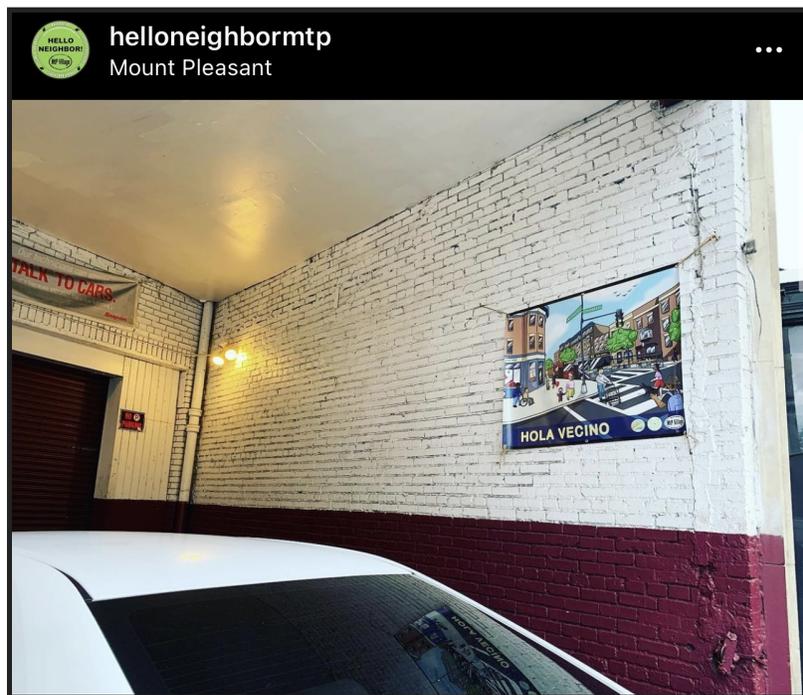


For those who are looking for even more fun ways to distract yourself on your phone, there's Instagram! And the Village (at least the Hello Neighbor project) is on Instagram. We wanted a way to reach out to younger people who might not be members but are enthusiastic residents of the neighborhood. You can follow us at @helloneighborntp!

Instagram is a popular, photo-based app that is free and open to anyone ages 13 and older. Globally, there are more than a billion users, making it one of the most popular social networks in the world. Instagram posts can be photos, videos or other graphic images and can include sound and other embellishments - words, sparkles, etc.

Instagram made headlines recently because of its potential for bullying and other negative effects, particularly around eating disorders and body image. Yet, as some users responded, it also has the potential to bring together groups who are marginalized and provide support. To see a post, you must "follow" the poster, and you can unfollow at any time. (Given what we've been posting, there is no potential for harm to anyone.)

For the Hello Neighbor campaign, Instagram has been a popular way to promote our activities and stay engaged with neighborhood businesses and residents. We have nearly 700 "followers" (users who have opted to see our posts) and have been running a scavenger hunt of sorts to see if people can identify the stores where we have Hello Neighbor banners and signs. The image below is typical (by the way, it's the Mt. Pleasant Auto Repair). It's been a fun way to engage with each other.



Join Mount Pleasant Village!

Membership Fee: \$50* annually per individual. For more information, contact Michael Burke at membership@mountpleasantvillage.org.

Donate: Make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check to Mount Pleasant Village at 1735 Lamont Street NW, Washington, DC 20010 or clicking the "Donate Now" button on our home page (mountpleasantvillage.org).

*Dues can be supported through a "scholarship" fund if the cost is a hardship.

The newsletter is a cooperative effort! If you have questions, comments, or news to share, contact: info@mountpleasantvillage.org



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